

VZCZCXRO8137
OO RUEHDT RUEHPB
DE RUEHC #5580/01 1751854
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 241831Z JUN 09
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
INFO RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 STATE 065580

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [ARF](#) [EAID](#) [TH](#) [ID](#) [PK](#) [IN](#)

SUBJECT: REPORT: ARF FINALIZES VISION STATEMENT, ADVANCES
INSTITUTIONAL INITIATIVES AT SENIOR OFFICIALS MEETING

Ref: Bangkok 1246

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: Senior officials, including U.S. Ambassador for ASEAN Affairs Scot Marciel, from ASEAN Regional Forum's (ARF) 27 members met to finalize negotiations on a draft Vision Statement, approve other institutional proposals, and discuss various regional security issues in Phuket, Thailand on May 20. The near-final Vision Statement reflects the consensus-based, gradualist approach of ARF's diverse membership. Outside of the much-discussed U.S.-proposed Model Arrangement for Use of Foreign Military Assets in Disaster Relief, ARF Senior Officials endorsed other institutional proposals in the fields of disaster relief, counter terrorism and transnational crime. Additionally, officials discussed North Korea, Burma, Afghanistan/Pakistan, and Iran. END SUMMARY

ARF'S MODEST VISION STATEMENT DRAFT FINALIZED

12. (SBU) ARF Senior Officials, including Ambassador Marciel, focused their May 20 discussions on the negotiation and finalization of a draft Vision Statement. Having delayed tabling a draft until moments before the opening of a April 21-22 working-level ARF meeting, Thailand had initial difficulty in gaining strong support for its lengthy, muddled draft. Ambassador Marciel, along with counterparts from some ASEAN and non-ASEAN countries, stressed the need for a more focused and forward-leaning Vision Statement appropriate for Ministerial endorsement. Many delegations favored a U.S.-tabled, shorter revision of the original Thailand draft. However, none seemed comfortable shelving the original Thai draft that ASEAN had earlier supported. While ARF Senior Officials continued discussion of other matters, Thailand chaired a separate working-level drafting session to iron out differences. Senior officials ultimately endorsed the key elements of that draft. The final draft is a slightly clearer yet still modest delineation of ARF's consensus-based and gradualist principles, endorsed a wide-ranging agenda on both traditional and non-traditional security issues, and called for an implementation plan to be approved at next year's ARF.

----- DISASTER RELIEF
EXERCISE, OTHER INITIATIVES BRIEFED

13. (SBU) The Philippines, along with the United States, briefed on the ARF disaster relief exercise, termed Voluntary Demonstration of Response (VDR). Participants welcomed the initiative as an example of tangible, concrete cooperation by ARF on an important transnational security issue. On the margins, Japan appears likely to announce its intention to serve as a co-sponsor of the next ARF disaster relief exercise. Indonesia is still considering its role as possible host, perhaps conducting an ARF exercise combined with the late 2010 annual ASEAN disaster relief exercise in Indonesia.

14. (U) A number of other institutional and security cooperation concepts were advanced, updated, and discussed. Notable items include:

--Model Arrangement for the Use of Foreign Military and Civil Defense Assets (MCDA) for Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (United

States, Indonesia): Senior officials held an extensive discussion on the U.S. draft concept paper and text for the Model MCDA Arrangement initiative. While some delegations welcomed the document, others such as India, Pakistan, and Indonesia (who had committed to serve as co-sponsor) continued to express reservations. The Thai chair ruled that unless objections are expressed in writing to the Thai Chair by mid-June, the proposal will be considered as endorsed by ARF Senior Officials, ready for approval by ARF Ministers on July 23, and ready for negotiations on a draft text during next inter-sessional year. The Model Arrangement is designed to produce a consensus text for ARF governments to use as a starting point for bilateral negotiations involving sensitive legal and policy issues regarding the introduction of foreign military focuses into disaster relief situations.

--Standardized Annual Security Outlook (ARF Unit): The ASEAN Secretariat's ARF Unit has been tasked by ARF Ministers to standardize and streamline the voluntary, annual submissions by ARF members of their security perceptions. With ASEAN still mulling over the Secretariat's proposed draft, the Annual Security Outlook template will be considered next inter-sessional year.

--Working Methods Paper (ARF Unit): The ARF Unit submitted a revised paper designed to consolidate several institutional reform initiatives. These include press engagement, streamlining ARF's meeting structure, and leadership by designated members over specific subject areas. Senior officials made some minor adjustments to the

STATE 00065580 002 OF 003

working methods for final approval by ARF Ministers.

--Preventive Diplomacy Work Plan (ARF Unit, New Zealand): Delegations discussed how ARF could better make use of the recommendations of a 2008 Study on Preventive Diplomacy, including the utility of crafting a preventive diplomacy work plan. ARF's official Track Two process, the ARF Expert and Eminent Persons, will produce such a draft.

--Work Plan on Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) (United States, ARF Unit): An updated version of the U.S.-proposed CTTC Work Plan was distributed. New project ideas and nominations for leadership positions were included.

NORTH KOREA AND OTHER SECURITY ISSUES DISCUSSED

Thai Permanent Secretary Virasakdi Futrikul chaired a session where senior officials delivered prepared interventions on a number of pressing issues affecting the regional security situation.

15. (U) KOREAN PENINSULA: Most delegations expressed deep concern over the DPRK's April 5 launch of a long-range rocket and its subsequent expulsion of IAEA personnel. All stressed that the peaceful resolution of the DPRK nuclear issue was vital to regional security. They urged continued support and full participation by the DPRK in the Six-Party Talks, the disablement of DPRK's nuclear programs, and full compliance by the DPRK with the UN Security Council Presidential Statement. The Japanese and North Korean delegations had a heated exchange on the issue.

16. (U) BURMA: Following a standard briefing by Burma on its political and humanitarian situation, most delegations focused on the need for genuine political dialogue and reform within Burma. ASEAN was commended for its role in the Tripartite Core Group facilitating relief assistance to Burmese victims of Cyclone Nargis. The meeting urged Burma to cooperate with the international community UN Special Representative Ibrahim Gambari in making progress toward democratic reform and national reconciliation. Ambassador Marciel also discussed U.S. views on the situation in Burma, including the U.S. policy review, and had a brief exchange with his Burmese counterpart on these issues (Ref A).

17. (U) IRAN, AFGHANISTAN/PAKISTAN, NONPROLIFERATION, OTHER ISSUES: The United States expressed serious concern about Iran's continued pursuit of a nuclear weapons program, and urged Iran to comply fully

and without delay with its international nonproliferation obligations. The U.S. delegation also spoke to its willingness to engage directly with Iran on this issue. Other delegations, including the EU, Japan, Australia, and Canada voiced similar concerns. A number of delegations pressed the need for greater reconstruction assistance in Afghanistan and stability in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region and the bilateral relationship. Pakistan welcomed the recent Friends of Pakistan meeting and pledged continued efforts to eradicate extremism. A number of delegations also spoke to the importance of the region, including ARF, combating transnational and non-traditional security threats such as disasters, maritime insecurity, terrorism, transnational crime, peacekeeping challenges, and climate change. Some delegations raised the need for greater cooperation on nonproliferation and disarmament matters in the lead-up to the 2010 Nonproliferation Review Conference and welcomed the recent statement from President Obama on the issue. Recent military actions in Sri Lanka, security implications of the global financial crisis, instability in the South China Sea, the Middle East, and Australia's proposal for streamlining regional architecture were also briefly noted by some delegations.

18. UPCOMING ARF ACTIVITIES:

- ARF Workshop on Laboratory Bio-Safety and Bio-Security, Manila, Philippines, June 10-11 [co-chairs: US, the Philippines]
- 1st Inter-Sessional Meeting (ISM) on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, Beijing, China, likely July 1-3, 2009 [co-chairs: United States, China, Singapore]
- ARF Peacekeeping Experts Meeting, June 23-24, Siem Reap, Cambodia [Japan, Cambodia]
- 16th ASEAN Regional Forum Ministerial, Thailand, July 23, 2009 [Thailand]
- 9th ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting (ISM) on Disaster Relief, Honolulu, Hawaii mid-September 2009 [co-chairs: United States, Thailand]

19. (U) POC: The POC for questions or follow-up is EAP/RSP Kevin Sheives (sheiveskw@state.gov, 202-647-1217). This report, a copy of the finalized Vision Statement, and other background information on ARF and U.S. participation in ARF can be found at:
<http://eap.state.gov/EAPOffices/RSP/ARF.cfm>

10. (SBU) COMMENT: Many delegations, especially within ASEAN, were unwilling to fundamentally redirect ARF's pace and agenda through the

STATE 00065580 003 OF 003

Vision Statement or set out a forward-leaning "vision" for ARF's future. Reflecting ASEAN's leadership style, the Thai Chair's risk-averse approach narrowed the chance that the Vision Statement would be the vehicle for a major reevaluation of the institution's purposes and mandate. The near-final text nonetheless contains many positive elements sympathetic to the U.S. views on prioritizing transnational security. However, the draft remains unfocused and still includes mandates for a gradualist approach to less successful traditional security and preventive diplomacy measures. The compromise text reflects the mixed viewpoints from ARF's 27 diverse members. The recent successful ARF disaster relief exercise and other modes of cooperation on transnational security matters suggest that ARF will most likely develop incrementally, focused in areas of common interest. Fundamental changes will be difficult to achieve.
CLINTON